

Project Proposal

Proposal Title: Otter Creek Aspen Regeneration Phase 1

Proposal Number: 1476

DWR Region: Northern Region

Lead Agency: BLM

County: Rich

Project Manager: Brad Jessop

PM Phone: 0

Regional Priority: Within Focus Area

Project Type: Terrestrial Habitat

Proposed Start Date: 1/7/2009

Project Location: 10 miles west of the town of Randolph Rich County, Utah

Project Description: Aspen regeneration on 35 acres

Description of Problem/Need: Aspen woodlands in Utah are crucial habitat for wildlife but are being lost to encroaching conifer. Once established, conifers limit understory diversity and production, eventually shade out mature aspen trees and severely limit the possibility of regeneration. If conifers are not removed by natural fire, disease, or insect events, then aspen stands are at risk of being lost. Although conifer encroachment into aspen is a natural process, it is occurring on a massive scale due mainly to fire suppression. We propose removing the encroaching conifer in the Otter Creek drainage using a combination of cutting followed by burning to promote aspen regeneration and improve understory vegetation condition.

The aspen stands in the area are generally small, scattered pockets on north facing slopes averaging 1-10 acres each. Spring prescribed burning will be used to remove conifers. Several months prior to burning, some green and dead conifers will be cut and left on site in order to create enough fuel to carry the fire through the stand.

Grazing of new shoots is of concern as it can severely inhibit their survival and jeopardize the success of the treatment. Depending on slope, some stands will be fenced with 4-strand barb wire while other areas will be "jackstrawed" (cutting trees so that they fall in such a manner as to create natural barriers thus discouraging ungulate use). Four-strand fences will remain on site until the new shoots are able to withstand grazing pressure.

- Objectives:**
1. □ Remove at least 80% of existing conifer through cutting and burning;
 2. □ Stimulate aspen regeneration;
 3. □ Increase aspen shoot density to a minimum of 1000 stems/acre over a 5 year period post treatment;
 4. □ Protect aspen suckers from grazing by creating "natural" barriers (tree felling) or fences.

Relevance to Strategic Plans: The Big Creek EIS was completed recently by the Wasatch-Cache National Forest in order to implement the same treatments we propose here but on a much larger scale. This proposed project is consistent with the Laketown Canyon Area of Critical Environmental Concern Management Plan 1989, and the Randolph Framework Management Plan 1980, as amended by the Salt Lake Field Office (SLFO) Fire Management Plan (FMP) 1998 Alternative 2-Proposed Action/Integrated Fire/Resource Management Plan.

The FMP specifically mentions the reintroduction of fire into the ecosystem to meet desired resource management objectives (p. 7). 'Vegetation management would include a wide variety of management activities including prescribed fire, mechanical manipulation, seeding to a less flammable and more desired species, fuelbreak establishment, and other strategies (p. 8).'

This project will increase the functioning of currently impaired ecosystems (Goal B: Conserve, protect, enhance, and manage Utah's ecosystems, of the DWR Strategic Plan, Objectives B-1 and B-2). Projects of this nature are identified in the BLM's Woodruff Pastures Allotment Management Plan, Randolph Management Framework Plan (1980) as amended by the SLFO Fire Management Plan (FMP) (1998) Alternative 2-Proposed Action/Integrated Fire/Resource Management Plan page seven in order to improve the condition of the rangeland. The objectives in the Woodruff Creek Fire Management Unit of the FMP are to utilize fuels treatments to reduce fire severity and occurrence and reduce hazardous fuel accumulation in areas that will reduce the threat of large uncontrolled wildland fires, create mosaics to increase edge effect, and improve wildlife and plant diversity (BLM-Salt Lake Field Office, Fire Management Plan, September 2004). The Otter Creek categorical exclusion (UT-020-2008-046) specifies the need and authorization for treatments in this area. This project will address the needs of conservation of the Tier II and Tier III species noted in the WAP identified in section 5.1, and also address the need for protection and restoration of the habitat types listed in section 7.1 of the WAP.

Potential Risks: none

Proposed Methods: Use chainsaws to slash (lop and drop) enough conifer to carry fire through the stand. Burn aspen stands in spring of 2009 using hand ignition or ground based Terra Torch. "Jackstraw" trees or construct fence around treated stands to protect aspen suckers from grazing.

Shapefile Name: HPD 2010\GIS Proposed\NR\1476.shp

Seed Source:

UPCD Reg Team Coord Date: 12/2/2008

Project Proposal

Proposed
NEPA Action:

Proposed
Arch Action:

☒ Vegetation Monitoring ☒ Wildlife Monitoring

Monitoring Information: Goshawk survey's will be done in early spring prior to burning. Pre-treatment vegetation data has already been collected to characterize aspen stand conditions. Multiple line point intercept transects were established to describe vegetation cover, composition and structure. Belt transects were used to determine aspen tree density based on size classes. Photo points were established in association with the line-point intersect transects. Data will be collected 1, 3, 5 and 10 years post-treatment to monitor aspen response and assess whether project objectives were met.

Grazing Management: Rangeland Health data was collected during 2007 on the New Canyon, Kearl, and Twin Peaks allotments. Preliminary analysis of the data collected in the analysis area identifies that the majority of the allotments are in a mid to late seral state. The treatment would improve the demand for forage among livestock and wildlife and would move the area towards the attainment of rangeland health standards (43 CFR

SPECIES BENEFITING

Elk	Mule Deer	Raptors	Moose
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LAND OWNERSHIP

Owner	Acres
BLM	35
Total	35

PROPOSED FUNDING

Source	Amount Requested	Date Approved	Amount Approved
BLM ARRA	\$18,000.00	3/13/2009	\$18,000.00
BLM	\$41,200.00		\$0.00
Totals	\$59,200.00		\$18,000.00

PROPOSED BUDGET

Item	Description	DWR Account	Partner Contrib.
NEPA		\$0.00	\$5,000.00
Personal Services	Project layout and design	\$0.00	\$2,500.00
Personal Services	Seasonal personnel time (6 days)	\$0.00	\$900.00
Motor Pool	BLM truck for seasonal	\$0.00	\$800.00
Personal Services	conifer slashing, burning aspen stands	\$0.00	\$32,000.00
Contractual Services	fencing (labor and materials) 35 acres	\$18,000.00	\$0.00
	Totals	\$18,000.00	\$41,200.00

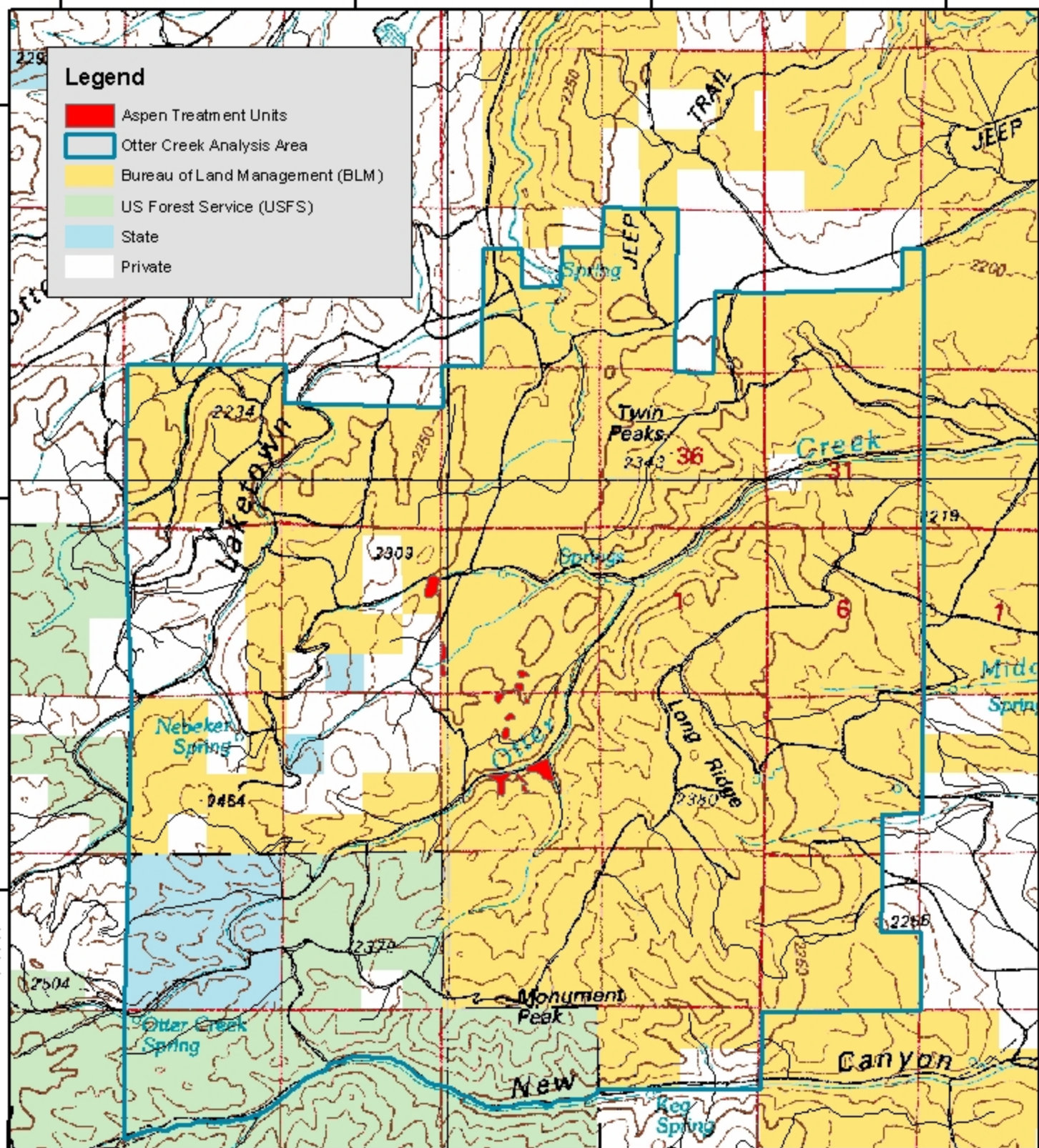
OTTER CREEK ASPEN REGENERATION

R 5 E

R 6 E

Legend

- Aspen Treatment Units
- Otter Creek Analysis Area
- Bureau of Land Management (BLM)
- US Forest Service (USFS)
- State
- Private



LOCATION



UTAH



0 0.5 1 2 Miles

1:55,000
UTM NAD83 ZONE 12

July 11, 2008

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
SALT LAKE FIELD OFFICE



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